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Jane Eyre.

BY CHARLOTTE BRONTE.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds as somber, and a rain so penetrating, that further out-door exercise was now out of the question.

I was glad of it; I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons; dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John and Georgiana Reed.

The said Eliza, John and Georgiana were now clustered round their mamma in the drawing-room; she lay reclining on a sofa by the fireside, and, with her darlings about her, (for the time neither quarreling nor crying,) looked perfectly happy. Me she had dispensed from joining the group, saying, "She regretted to be under the necessity of keeping me at a distance; but that until she heard from Bessie, and she could discover by her own observation that I was endeavoring in good earnest to acquire a more sociable and childlike disposition, a more attractive and sprightly manner—something lighter, franker, more natural, as it were—she really must exclude me from privileges intended only for contented, happy little children."

"What does Bessie say I have done?" I asked.

"Jane, I don't like cavilers or questioners; besides, there is something truly forbidding in a child taking up her elders in that manner. Be seated somewhere;

and, until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent."

A small breakfast-room adjoining the drawing-room; I slipped in there. It contained a book-case; I soon possessed myself of a volume, taking care that it should be one stored with pictures. I mounted into the window-seat; gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement.

Folds of scarlet drapery shut in my view to the right hand; to the left were the clear panes of glass protecting, but not separating me from the drear November day. At intervals, while turning over the leaves of my book, I studied the aspect of that winter afternoon. Afar it offered a pale blank of mist and cloud; near, a scene of wet lawn and storm-beat shrub, with ceaseless

rain sweeping away wildly before a long and lamentable blast.

I returned to my book—Bewick's History of British Birds; the letter-press thereof I cared little for, generally speaking; but there were certain introductory pages that, child as I was, I could not pass quite as a blank. They were those which treat of the haunts of sea-fowl; of "the solitary rocks and promontories" by them only inhabited; of the coast of Norway, studded with isles from its southern extremity, the Lindenness, or Naze, to the North Cape—

"Where the Northern Ocean in vast whirls
Boils round the naked, melancholy isles
Of farthest Thule; and the Atlantic surge
Pours in among the stormy Hebrides."

Nor could I pass unnoticed the suggestions on the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with "the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space—that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights surround the pole, and concentrate the multiplied rigors of extreme cold." Of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own—shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children's brains, but strangely impressive. The words in these introductory pages connected themselves with the succeeding vignettes, and gave significance to the rock standing up alone in a sea of billow and spray; to the broken boat stranded on a desolate coast; to the cold and ghastly moon glancing through bars of cloud at a wreck just sinking.

I cannot tell what sentiment haunted the quiet, solitary church-yard with its inscribed headstone; its gate, its two trees, its low horizon, girdled by a broken wall, and its newly-risen crescent, attesting the hour of eventide.

The two ships becalmed on a torpid sea, I believed to be marine phantoms.



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Charlotte Temple.

BY MRS. ROWSON.

CHAPTER I.

A BOARDING-SCHOOL.

"Are you for a walk?" said Montraville to his companion, as they arose from the table; "are you for a walk, or shall we order a chaise and proceed to Portsmouth?" Belcour preferred the former; and they sauntered out to view the town, and to make remarks on the inhabitants as they returned from church.

Montraville was a lieutenant in the army; Belcour was his brother officer; they had been to take leave of their friends previous to their departure for America, and were now returning to Portsmouth, where the troops awaited orders for embarkment. They had stopped at Chichester to dine; and knowing they had sufficient time to reach the place of destination before dark, and yet allow them a walk, had resolved, it being Sunday afternoon, to take a survey of the Chichester ladies as they returned from their devotions.

They had gratified their curiosity, and were preparing to return to the inn without honoring any of the belles with particular attention, when Madame Du Pont, at the head of her school, descended from the church. Such an assemblage of youth and innocence naturally attracted the young soldiers; they stopped; and as the little cavalcade passed, almost involuntarily pulled off their hats. A tall, elegant girl looked at Montraville, and blushed; he instantly recollected the features of Charlotte Temple, whom he had once seen and danced with at a ball at Portsmouth. At the time he thought on her as a very lovely child, she being then only thirteen; but the improvement two years had made in her person, and the blush of recollection which suffused her cheeks as she passed, awakened in his bosom new and pleasing ideas. Vanity led him to think that pleasure at again beholding him might have occasioned the emotion he had witnessed; and the same vanity led him to wish to see her again.

"She is the sweetest girl in the world," said he, as he entered the inn. Belcour started. "Did you not notice her?" continued Montraville. She had on a blue bonnet, and with a pair of lovely eyes of the same color, has contrived to make me feel devilish odd about the heart."

"Poh," said Belcour, "a musket-ball from our friends, the Americans, may in a month or two make you feel worse."

"I never think of the future," said Montraville, "but am determined to make the most of the present, and would willingly compound with any kind Familiar who would inform me who the girl is, and how I might be likely to obtain an interview."

But no kind Familiar at that time appeared, and the chaise, which they had ordered, driving up to the door, Montraville and his companion were obliged to take leave of Chichester and its fair inhabitant, and proceed on their journey.

But Charlotte had made too great an impression on his mind to be easily eradicated; having therefore spent three whole days in thinking on her, and endeavoring to form some plan for seeing her, he determined to set off for Chichester, and trust to chance either to favor or frustrate his designs. Arriving at the verge of the town, he dismounted, and sending the servant forward with the horses, proceeded toward the place, where, in the midst of an extensive pleasure-ground, stood the mansion which contained the lovely Charlotte Temple. Montraville leaned on a broken gate, and looked earnestly at the house. The wall which surrounded it was high, and perhaps the Arguses who guarded the Hesperian fruit within were more watchful than those famed of old.

"'Tis a romantic attempt," said he, "and should I even succeed in seeing and conversing with her, it can be productive of no good. I must of necessity leave England in a few days, and probably may never return; why, then, should I endeavor to engage the affections of this lovely girl, only to leave her a prey to a thousand inquietudes? I will return to Portsmouth, and think no more about her."

The evening was now closed; a serene stillness reigned; and the moon, with her silver crescent, faintly illuminated the hemisphere.

The mind of Montraville was calmed by the serenity of the surrounding objects. "I will think on her no more," said he, and turned with an intention to leave the place; but as he turned, he saw the gate which led to the pleasure-grounds open, and two women came out, who walked arm-in-arm across the field. "I will at least see who these are," said he.

He overtook them, and, after saluting, begged leave to see them into the more frequented parts of the town; but how was he delighted, when, waiting for an answer, he discovered, under the concealment of a large bonnet, the face of Charlotte Temple.

He soon found means to ingratiate himself with her companion, who was a French teacher at the school, and at parting, slipped a letter he had purposely written, into Charlotte's hand, and five guineas into that of mademoiselle, who promised she would endeavor to bring her young charge into the field again the next evening.



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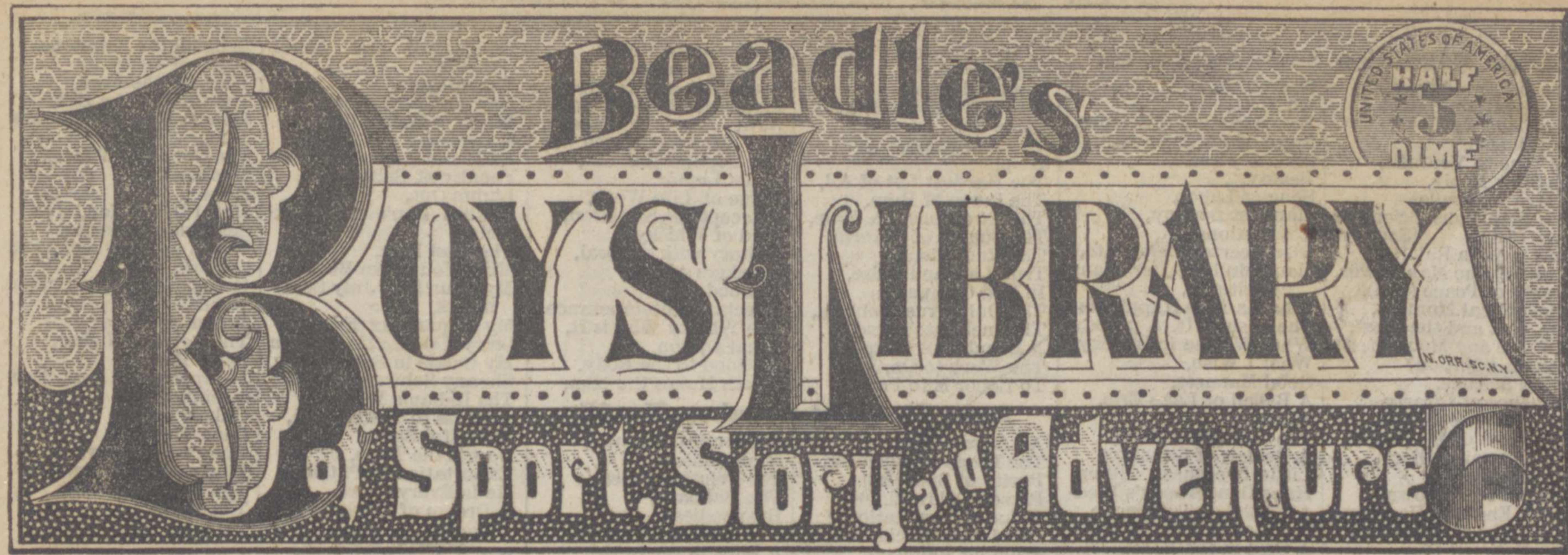
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